

# **Frequently Asked Questions**

## **Virginia Grade Level Alternative**



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### Frequently Asked Questions by Teachers

**Q1. What kind of student would take the VGLA?**

The VGLA is an appropriate assessment for students with disabilities. The typical student with disabilities who is eligible for the VGLA has a current IEP and needs accommodations that fall outside those allowed for the general administration of the paper and pencil or online formats of the Standards of Learning (SOL) test. Students with limited English proficiency who are eligible for the VGLA reading must be classified at level 1 or level 2 of English language proficiency.

**Q2. In which grade-level and content areas can the VGLA be used as an alternative to the SOL assessments?**

The VGLA is available for students with disabilities and limited English proficient (LEP) students in grades 3-8. It is available for students with disabilities in the content areas of reading, mathematics, science, history/social science, and writing. It is available for eligible students with limited English proficiency in the content area of reading only.

**Q3. Can materials that are below grade level be used as evidence in the VGLA collection of evidence?**

As a grade-level alternative to the SOL assessment, the VGLA requires materials to be appropriate to the grade level of the student's enrollment. If materials are submitted that are clearly below grade level, the evidence cannot receive the highest score point.

**Q4. Can students use accommodations on VGLA evidence?**

Yes. A student may submit evidence using accommodations as specified within the student's current IEP, 504 plan or LEP Student Assessment Participation Plan. It should be noted, however, that students with disabilities should only use the read-aloud or audio accommodation on the reading test if they have been determined eligible for the accommodation by the local school division.

**Q5. Collecting samples of work for students submitting a VGLA takes a great deal of effort. Why do teachers have to prepare collections of evidence of student's work for this assessment?**

Collecting work samples and student products are a routine part of the ongoing instructional process. Although additional work is required to organize the collection of evidence and to prepare it for submission, the VGLA provides students with disabilities a method of demonstrating their knowledge of SOL content through non-traditional means. Given the broad range of methods available by students participating in the VGLA, a collection of evidence is the most flexible and efficient method for examining student performance.

**Q6. Can the VGLA Collection of Evidence be reviewed by parents and other school personnel?**

Yes. The Collection of Evidence is available for review and feedback by the student, parents, and other school personnel as needed.

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#### **Q7. How is the VGLA scored?**

The VGLA is submitted to the school division and scored by locally maintained scorers or scoring teams. Scorers will receive training on the process of applying the scoring rubric to submitted evidence, use of the online scoring system, and other information pertinent to scoring the VGLA. The VGLA rubric, rubric addendum, and scoring rules are available in Section 6.8 of this manual.

#### **Q8. Why is my local school division scoring the VGLA and what is the online system?**

Scoring VGLA entries is the joint responsibility of the local school division, the testing contractor, and the Virginia Department of Education. Local scorers or scoring teams are responsible for examining evidence and rating performance. The testing contractor and the Virginia Department of Education, via an online scoring system, will calculate proficiency and provide online reports.

The scoring process will involve scorers or scoring teams examining submitted evidence for specific content area standards and applying a scoring rubric, rubric addendum, and scoring rules in order to assign a value to the evidence presented in a holistic manner. Once all evidence submitted for a specific VGLA entry has been scored, scorers or scoring teams will enter their ratings of student performance in the online scoring system. The online scoring system will then generate a final score and proficiency level.

#### **Q9. What is a VGLA audit?**

After the submission window for VGLA entries, the testing contractor will randomly select submitted entries for audit. The purpose of the VGLA audit is to ensure that scorers or scoring teams are correctly applying the scoring rubric to submitted evidence.

#### **Q10. How will I know if my school or student has been selected for an audit of his or her VGLA?**

The Division Director of Testing will be notified in writing that a student (or students) within the division has been selected for VGLA audit(s). Audited entries will be generated at random for all submitted entries for a given administration.